Road connectivity of North-Eastern States

1130. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether North-Eastern States are poorly connected by road with each other and with other parts of India and what special projects are being taken up to improve this situation; and

(b) the time it would take to bring the region at par with other States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) Development and improvement of National Highways is a continuous process and the works are undertaken depending upon availability of funds and their *inter-se* priority on all India basis. North Eastern Region is served by 28 National Highways aggregating to 6880 km length. All the State capitals of the region are connected by a network of National Highways. However, special programmes have been envisaged by the Ministry for upgradation of road connectivity of the region. To connect the region with rest of the country, East-West corridor is being constructed to 4-lane standards, 678 km length of which is located in North East from Silchar to Srirampur, the border of Assam and West Bengal. All State capital towns of the region are proposed to be connected by 4-lane and all the district headquarters are proposed to be connected by at least 2-lane roads under National Highways Development Programme-III (NHDP-III) and the Special Accelerated Road Development Programme for North Eastern Region (SARDP-NE), covering improvement/upgradation of 9788 km roads of various categories, *viz.* National Highways, State roads, Strategic roads and GS roads. The Special Accelerated Road Development Programme is divided in 2 phases. Only Phase 'A' comprising 2304 km roads has been approved by the Government for implementation.

(b) 678 km portion of East West corridor under National Highways Development Programme-II is targeted for completion by 2010. NHDP-III covering widening to 4-lane of 1051 km National Highways and Phase 'A' of SARDP-NE are targeted for completion by 2013. Regarding Phase 'B' covering improvement of 6433 km roads, it is too early to indicate the target for its completion, as implementation decision is yet to be taken by the Government.

Committee's suggestions for old vessels

1131. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether an Expert Committee has suggested stopping of vessels older than 25 years from sailing in Indian waters and by 2010 phasing out all oil tankers with single hull, etc.;

(b) if so, by when these recommendations would be implemented; and

(c) how many marine accidents happened in the years 2005 and 2006 and whether ship wrecks were mostly of ships over 25 years old?